(b) The Commission has urged the Government of India to act with speed and determination to re-write the laws regarding child labour and acting with the State Governments, set a time frame to achieve free and compulsory education for the children of the country.

Employment exchanges

†3103. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are some districts in the country where the employment exchanges are not functioning;

(b) if so, the name of such districts, State-wise;

(c) whether Government have set a target to open employment exchanges in all district Headquarters and the cities having population over one lakh; and

(d) if so, by when, these employment exchanges would be opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) There are 943 Employment Exchanges in the country as on March, 2003. Employment Exchanges function under the financial and administrative control of the State/Union Territory Governments. The respective State/Union Territory Governments decide opening or closing of Employment Exchanges keeping in view the local need of various regions of the State.

Bonded girl labourers in A.P.

3104. MISS MABEL REBELLO:

SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether during a survey girls were found engaged as bonded labour in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether this illegal practice has been going on since long;

(c) whether around 4,50,000 children in the age group of 6—14 years are employed in cotton seed fields in the country of which Andhra Pradesh alone account for 2,47,800; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government to free them from bonded labour and send them to schools under the new legislative provisions of free education?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) As per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition No. 465/86 dated 10.12.1996, a survey was conducted during the year 1997 for identification of child labour in hazardous and non-hazardous employment. No girl child bonded labourers were found in Andhra Pradesh during the above mentioned survey.

(b) No, Sir. During the year 2002 as per the information received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh only two child bonded labourers were detected in Andhra Pradesh. They were released and rehabilitated and prosecution was launched against the offenders.

(c) Industry-wise/Sector-wise data on working children is not maintained.

As per the information received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, it is not correct to say that 2,47,800 children were employed in the Cotton fields. However, during the year 2000, through a special drive, 2951 girl child labourers were detected in Cotton fields in the State.

(d) Bonded Labourers including child-bonded labourers freed from bondage are rehabilitated under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme and other poverty alleviation programmes being implemented in States. In addition, two Schemes exclusively for the benefit of children withdrawn from work namely, the Scheme of National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) and Grant-in-Aid to voluntary organizations, have been launched. Under the Scheme of NCLPs, 100 National Child Labour Projects have been started in 13 child labour endemic States to provide formal/non-formal education, occupational training, stipend, nutrition, health care etc. for the children withdrawn from work.

Deposit of Employees Provident Fund

3105. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Provident Fund of the employees of Punjab Wakf Board is not being deposited with the Provident Fund Commissioner;

(b) if so, since when and what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what action has been taken against those responsible for this state of affairs; and